

Please amend claim 10 to read as follows:

- A2
1. A device, comprising:
a flexible substrate;
a plurality of contact pads on a first surface of the substrate; and
a strain relief structure, positioned between two of the plurality of contact pads.
 2. The device of claim 1 wherein the strain relief structure is an aperture, penetrating through the flexible substrate from the first surface to a second surface.
 3. The device of claim 2 wherein the aperture has, in plan view, a rectangular shape.
 4. The device of claim 1, wherein the strain relief structure is a thinned region of the flexible substrate.
 5. The device of claim 4, wherein the thinned region has, in plan view, a rectangular shape.
 6. The device of claim 1, wherein the strain relief structure is centered on a line between centers of two of the plurality of contact pads.
 7. The device of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of electrical traces, each of the plurality of electrical traces being in electrical contact with one of the plurality of contact pads.
 8. The device of claim 7, wherein the strain relief structure is positioned such that it interrupts one of the plurality of electrical traces.

9. An electrical connector, comprising:
a flexible substrate;
a plurality of contact pads arranged in a regular configuration on a first surface of the substrate;

a plurality of electrical traces on the flexible substrate, each of the plurality of electrical traces being in electrical contact with a respective one of the plurality of contact pads;
and

a plurality of apertures penetrating through the flexible substrate, the plurality of apertures arranged in a regular configuration and intercalated into the plurality of contact pads.

Amended
A2
10. (Amended) A method of manufacturing a flexible connector, comprising:
forming, on a first surface of a flexible substrate, a plurality of contact pads;
forming, on the flexible substrate, a plurality of electrical traces, each of the plurality of electrical traces being in contact with one of the plurality of contact pads; and
forming, between two of the plurality of contact pads, a strain relief structure.

11. The method of claim 10, further including breaking one of the electrical traces with the forming the strain relief structure step.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein the strain relief structure is an aperture penetrating the flexible substrate from the first surface to a second surface.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein each of the plurality of electrical traces is formed on either the first surface of the flexible substrate, a second surface of the substrate or an inner layer of the substrate.

Please add new claims 14-17 to read as follows:

A3
14. (New) A flexible connector, comprising:
a flexible substrate;

a plurality of contact pads formed on a first surface of the substrate and arranged in a regular configuration in a contact region of the substrate; and

means for increasing flexibility of the substrate in the contact region.

15. (New) The connector of claim 14 wherein the means for increasing flexibility comprises a plurality of apertures intercalated with the plurality of contact pads and penetrating the flexible substrate from the first surface to a second surface, opposite the first.

16. (New) The connector of claim 14 wherein the means for increasing flexibility comprises a plurality of blind apertures intercalated with the plurality of contact pads and penetrating the flexible substrate from the first surface to selected depth.

17. (New) The connector of claim 14 wherein the means for increasing flexibility comprises a thinning of the flexible substrate in the contact region, relative to a thickness of the substrate outside the contact region.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 17 will be pending upon entry of the present amendment. Claim 10 is amended and claims 14 through 17 are new.

The Examiner has objected to the specification on page 1, line 2, as requiring a serial number in the blank. Accordingly, the heading "CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS" and the paragraph immediately following, in which priority is claimed from a provisional application, has been amended to include the appropriate application number.

The Examiner has rejected claims 10 through 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, and has requested that the preamble be clarified to indicate what the method is intended for. Accordingly, the preamble of claim 10 has been amended to read "a method of manufacturing a flexible connector." This amendment is for purposes of clarity only, and does not affect the scope of claim 10.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 through 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Furnival (U.S. Patent No. 3,977,074).